

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 IO-10 /069 W

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O R 140723Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3792

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0903

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IIMS PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: MPLA OFFENSIVE CONTINUES: HIGH COMMISSIONER TRIES TO
BRING THEM TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE.

1. DURING THE NIGHT OF JULY 13 I TALKED WITH A NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LUANDA. ALL AGREED THAT THE MPLA IS WELL ON THE WAY TO GAINING ITS OBJECTIVE OF DRIVING FNLA OUT OF THE CITY, BUT BEYOND THAT I GATHERED A NUMBER OF RUMORS AND OPINIONS. THE THREE MOST INTERESTING ARE: MPLA WILL UNILATERALLY DECLARE INDEPENDENCE IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO; MPLA WILL FORMALLY DECLARE ON FNLA; AND, CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE PORTUGUESE ARMY PLAN TO DECLARE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE MPLA AND TO PUT THE ARMY HERE AT THE SERVICE OF MPLA.

2. I CONTACTED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER LATE AT NIGHT JULY 13. HE HAS BEEN WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK TO BRING MPLA TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE, BUT WITH NO SUCCESS. ALL MPLA LEADERS ARE UNAVAILABLE, INCLUDING AGOSTINHO NETO. HE DID MANAGE TO SIT PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL MEMBER LOPO DE NASCIMENTO DOWN FOR AN HOUR AND ARRANGE
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A MEETING FOR SIX AT NIGHT ON JULY 13 WITH THE OTHER LIBERATION

MOVEMENTS. NASCIMENTO NEVER SHOWED UP.

3. TO COUNTER CHARGES THAT THE PORTUGUESE ARMY IS HELPING MPLA, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TOLD FNLA THEY COULD SEND AS MANY OBSERVERS AS THEY WISHED WITH PORTUGUESE PATROLS TO OVERSEE THEIR OPERATIONS. HE CLAIMED HIS TROOPS WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN KEEPING THE MPLA FROM ATTACKING FNLA AND THAT IN SOME CASES THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN MOVING MPLA FORCES BACK FROM AREAS IN WHICH FNLA TROOPS WERE CONCENTRATED. I SAW NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH ACTIVITIES ON THE PART OF PORTUGUESE TROOPS DURING MY TRAVELS THROUGH THE CITY. ALMOST ALL OF THE PORTUGUESE FORCES I SAW WERE RIDING AROUND IN TRUCKS WITH NO APPARENT OBJECTIVE OTHER THAN TO MAKE SURE THEY DID NOT RUN INTO ANY BELLIGERENTS. ON JULY 12 I DID SEE PORTUGUESE PATROL TAKE UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS BEHIND THEIR TRUCK WITH THEIR WEAPONS AT THE READY. AT THAT TIME MPLA WAS SEARCHING OUT FNLA SNIPERS AND I THINK THE PORTUGUESE WERE PREPARED TO SHOOT AT WHOEVER FIRED AT THEM.

4. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO ISSUED AN APPEAL TO ALL OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF COASTWISE VESSELS TO CALL THE PALACE. MANY OF THE BLACK REFUGEES FROM THE GHETTOS ARE BACONGO AND WANT DESPERATELY TO GET TO NORTHERN ANGOLA, BUT HAVE NO POSSIBILITY TO DO SO BECAUSE THE MPLA HAS ALL ROADS BLOCKED. THE GENERAL HOPES TO BE ABLE TO GET CONTRACTS WITH THE SHIPERS TO CARRY THESE PEOPLE TO PORTS ABOVE THE MPLA BLOCKADE.

5. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND OTHER PORTUGUESE MILITARY AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THE MPLA WILL BE ABLE TO DRIVE FNLA OUT OF THE CITY. FNLA HAS FEW POSSIBILITIES OF RESUPPLY AND MUST AT SOME POINT RUN OUT OF AMMUNITION. (*)- #- THREATENED TO INVADE FROM THE NORTH, BUT NOBODY I HAVE TALKED TO IN THE LAST DAY OR TWO GIVES THEM MUCH OF A CHANCE TO MAKE ANY HEADWAY. WHAT THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO IF THEY GET AN OFFENSIVE UNDERWAY IS TO TAKE SOME PRESSURE OFF THEIR FORCES IN LUANDA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, COMBAT OPERATIONS, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00903
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750242-0510
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750759/aaaacaox.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <08 DEC 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MPLA OFFENSIVE CONTINUES: HIGH COMMISSIONER TRIES TO BRING THEM TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE.
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, AO, FNLA, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006